

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1636

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUCHAREST 1068

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, RO

SUBJECT: PUNGAN CALL ON PRESIDENT CARTER

REF: STATE 32933

1. WE SUSPECT PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE OF PUNGAN MISSION IS TO SECURE AGREEMENT FOR EARLY CEASESCU VISIT TO WASHINGTON, PROBABLY IN CONJUNCTION WITH A TRIP TO CANADA TO SIGN NUCLEAR COOPERATION AGREEMENTS. TIMING WOULD, OF COURSE, DEPEND ON RATHER UNCERTAIN PROGRESS OF CANADIAN-ROMANIAN NEGOTIATIONS, WITH WHICH DEPARTMENT MORE FAMILIAR THAN WE, BUT AS OF MY EARLY FEBRUARY TALK WITH CEAUSESCU DID NOT SEEM LIKELY TO WIND UP BEFORE MID-YEAR.

2. WE HAVE NO DOUBT CEASESCU BADLY WANTS AT LEAST A WASHINGTON STOPOVER TO REESTABLISH TYPE OF CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WHICH GOR ENJOYED WITH NIXON AND FORD ADMINISTRATIONS AND TO CONTINUE TRADITIONAL ROMANIAN "BALANCING ACT". AN EVEN MORE IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION FOR ROMANIAN POLICY AT PRESENT FOLLOWING LAST NOVEMBER'S BREZHNEV VISIT AND WARSAW PACT MEETING IN BUCHAREST. IN MY CONVERSATIONS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MONTHS WITH BOTH PUNGAN AND PRESIDENTIAL COUNSELOR MIRCEA MALITA THEY STRESSED THAT, AS A MATTER OF HIGH PRIORITY, IT WAS "OBVIOUSLY" NECESSARY TO "RENEW" CONFIDENTIAL

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ROMANIA'S TIES WITH AMERICA'S TOP LEADERSHIP.

3. SECOND MAJOR OBJECTIVE WILL PROBABLY BE TO GUAGE TOP-LEVEL U.S. ATTITUDES TOWARD ROMANIA. HE UNDOUBTEDLY IS UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO REPORT TO CEAUSESCU ON PROSPECTS FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE U.S.-ROMANIAN RELATIONS. HE IS LIKELY TO BE PART-

ICULARLY INTERESTED IN TRYING TO ASCERTAIN WHAT PRACTICAL EFFECT PRESIDENT CARTER AND NEW ADMINISTRATION'S DEEP COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES MEANS FOR ROMANIA. PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENTS ON DISARMAMENT - FAVORITE ROMANIAN TOPIC - HAVE STRUCK A RESPONSIVE CORD HERE AND PUNGAN IS LIKELY TO INQUIRE HOW INTENTIONS ARE TO BE TRANSLATED INTO CONCRETE PROPOSALS AND IMPLEMENTATION, ESPECIALLY IN MBFR FRAMEWORK WHERE ROMANIA FEELS LEFT OUT.

4. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF BILATERAL U.S.-ROMANIAN ISSUES ON WHICH HE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE WELL BRIEFED, WHICH - TIME AND ATMOSPHERE PERMITTING- HE MAY RAISE IF ONLY TO ASK FOR FAVORABLE ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERATION IN PRINCIPLE. THESE ISSUES INCLUDE NUCLEAR COOPERATION AND CONCESSIONAL AID, U.S. EXPORT LICENSING CONTROL, EXIM CREDIT, U. S. TRADE RESTRAINTS, AND ROMANIAN DISSATISFACTION WITH JACKSON-VANIK AMENDMENT.

5. PUNGAN WILL PROBABLY BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS WITH THE PRESIDENT A NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL ISSUE, PARTICULARLY GOR'S RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS. AS YOU KNOW, THE ROMANIANS HAVE BEEN VERY ACTIVE RECENTLY IN CONTACTS WITH VARIOUS PARTIES TO THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE. THEY HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY ATTENTIVE TO THEIR TIES WITH THE PLO ON WHOM THEY SAY THEY HAVE BEEN URGING MODERATION. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT CEAUSESCU MAY WANT TO SIGNAL SOMETHING NEW IN THIS CONTEXT. FRANKLY, WE ARE CONFIDENTIAL

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HARD PUT TO IMAGINE WHAT IT MIGHT BE. OTHER POSSIBLE TOPICS COULD INCLUDE THE CHINESE-SOVIET-ROMANIAN TRIANGULAR CONUNDRUM, ROMANIAN CSCE EXPECTATIONS, YUGSLAVIA AND PERHAPS THE HARDY PERENNIAL OF ROMANIAN GOOD OFFICES IN THE KOREAN TANGLE.

6. PUNGAN AND ION VASILE WERE ISSUED U.S. VISAS AT MFA REQUEST FEBRUARY 15 FOR DEPARTURE FROM BUCHAREST FEBRUARY 16. VASILE IS MIDDLE-GRADE OFFICER IN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE WHOM WE REGARD AS A BUREAUCRATIC HACK, KNOWN PRIMARILY FOR PROBLEMS HE CREATED IN LONG-TERM AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS AND NOVEMBER JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSION MEETING. WE ARE BAFFLED AS TO WHY HE WAS CHOSEN AS PUNGA'S TRAVELING COMPANION.

7. THE BRITISH EMBASSY INFORMS US PUNGAN STOPPING IN LONDON FOR THREE DAYS ENROUTE WASHINGTON. IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE HE WILL GO ON TO OTTAWA FROM WASHINGTON IN AN EFFORT TO NAIL DOWN DATES FOR A CEAUSESCU

VISIT THERE BY EXPEDITING NUCLEAR REACTOR
NEGOTIATIONS.

8. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, PUNGAN HAS PLAYED ROLE
OF SPECIAL PRESIDENTIAL ENVOY TO UNITED STATES ON
SEVERAL PREVIOUS OCCASIONS INCLUDING RIGHT AFTER
PRESIDENT FORD'S ASSUMING OFFICE. FACT THAT CEAU-
SECU CONTINUES TO USE HIM IN THIS CAPACITY IS OBVIOUS
PROOF OF KEY COUNSELOR ROLE HE PLANS IN PRESIDENT'S
INNER CIRCLE. PUNGAN IS ALSO ONE OF CANDIDATES
CURRENTLY RUMORED AS SOON TO REPLACE FONMIN
MACOVESCU. MEMORANDUM OF MY FEBRUARY 1 CONVER-
SATION WITH HIM AND FEBRUARY 9 CONVERSATION WITH
MALITA MAY BE OF SOME FURTHER HELP ON BACKGROUND.

9. MY OWN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUBJECTS THAT MIGHT BE
RAISED BY THE PRESIDENT WILL BE SENT FEBRUARY 22.
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I AM DELAYING THEM BECAUSE CEAUSESCU MAY SAY SOMETHING
TO ME AT AIRPORT THIS WEEKEND WHEN HE LEAVES FOR
AFRICA.
BARNES

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